war, which had necessitated the entrusting of the Hawk's food-supply to unskilled hands, and had led, particularly after the introduction of meat-rationing, to an excess of shot rabbit on the menu. Rabbit is not a natural food for Peregrines, and has never been considered suitable as a staple diet.

Normally, of course, Hawks have the power of ejecting fur or feathers from the stomach within twenty-four hours of their being swallowed, ejection taking place through the mouth, *via* the crop, in the form of a pellet or casting. In the present case the casting mechanism had evidently for some reason been put out of gear, and the fur started to accumulate in snowball fashion in the stomach, instead of being daily ejected. At a guess the ball represents some twenty normal castings, which would give a minimum period of accumulation of three weeks. The first outward symptom was the Hawk's sudden and almost complete refusal of food, which persisted for some eight days, at the end of which time he was becoming emaciated and weak on his legs, and obviously in need of drastic remedial treatment if he was to survive.

A somewhat bold diagnosis of the trouble was made, and the rather desperate remedy of opening the stomach, an operation prescribed for such an emergency, and explained in some detail, by a Persian falconer nearly a century ago, was decided upon. The Hawk was anæsthetised with ether, the stomach opened, the hair-ball, which completely filled and distended it, removed, and everything stitched back into place with sewing silk. Notwithstanding the over-enthusiasm of the anæsthetist, and a progressive throwing to the winds of the initial attempts to ensure sterile conditions, the Hawk survived, and appears to be making a complete recovery.

A new Race of the African Mountain Wagtail.

Dr. C. B. Ticehurst forwarded the following description :—

Motacilla clara torrentium, subsp. nov.

Description.—Similar to *Motacilla clara clara*, but smaller.

Distribution.—E. Cape Province, Natal, Portuguese East Africa, Nyasaland, Tanganyika, Uganda, Kenya, Belgian Congo, Sierra Leone, Cameroons, Angola.

Type.—In the British Museum, male adult, Ngoye Forest, Zululand, October 8, 1904 ; collected by Capt. C. H. B. Grant. Brit. Mus. Reg. no. 1905.12.29.1542.

Measurements.—Wing, 17 males, 74·5–82·5, 83, 84 ; 13 females, 74·5–81, 83·5 ; 8 unsexed, 76–81 mm., as against *M. c. clara* from Abyssinia, 4 males, 86·5–90·5 ; 5 females, 85·5–88·5 mm.

Notes on African Birds.

Mr. J. D. Macdonald sent the following two notes :—

(1) The Correct Status of *Chloropeta similis* Richmond.

Recently *Chloropeta similis* Richmond has been regarded as a high altitude race of *C. natalensis* Smith ; but evidence from several independent sources make it necessary to revise this decision.

C. similis is found in most East African mountains over 6–7000 feet. Groups isolated on widely separated mountains such as Kilimanjaro, Ruwenzori, and the Imatong Mountains in the southern Sudan are apparently identical. It is replaced at lower elevations by *C. natalensis*, which lives in close association over a wide area, and which shows gradual changes in certain characters towards the limits of its distribution in central Abyssinia, Cameroons, Angola, and south-east Africa. But there are no gradual changes between the characters of the high and low altitude forms.

When identifying collections made in the southern Sudan I found that the *Chloropeta* from the foothills of the Imatong Mountains, by the brown-crested character of its head, appeared to have a closer affinity to those from South Africa or Cameroons than to others found only a few miles away, but several thousand feet higher up in the same mountains, and which had no indication of a brown crest.

In the Rev. Zool. Bot. Afr. vol. xxxiii. fasc. i. p. 8, 1939, Moreau writes :—" It is difficult to remain convinced that the relationship between *massaica* [*C. natalensis massaica*] and *similis* is correctly regarded as subspecific ; for though the two forms repeatedly appear in proximity, it does not seem that specimens with intermediate head-colour have been